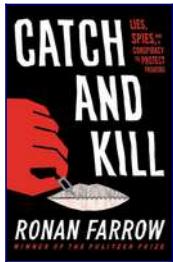


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CATCH AND KILL – RONAN FARROW’S EXPOSE OF HIRED POLITICAL CHARACTER ASSASSINS USED BY THE WHITE HOUSE



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Catch and Kill: Lies, Spies, and a Conspiracy to Protect Predators

by

[Ronan Farrow](#)

4.41 ·

[Rating details](#) · [86,240 ratings](#) · [9,600 reviews](#)

In 2017, a routine network television investigation led Ronan Farrow to a story only whispered about: one of Hollywood's most powerful producers was a predator, protected by fear, wealth, and a conspiracy of silence. As Farrow drew closer to the truth, shadowy operatives, from high-priced lawyers to elite war-hardened spies, mounted a secret campaign of intimidation, threa [...more](#)

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Hardcover, 608 pages

Published October 15th 2019 by Little, Brown and Company

Enemies of the people

by [Tiana Lowe, Commentary Writer](#) |

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When NBC News hired Ronan Farrow in 2014, it welcomed him not as a Rhodes scholar or Yale Law School graduate but as a telegenic Hollywood insider with a Golden Globe-winning mother and either an Oscar- or a Grammy-winning father. But by October 2017, when he published his blockbuster exposé of Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein in the *New Yorker*, Farrow had vanquished not only the city that built him, but the network, NBC, that was supposed to hold Hollywood to account.

Farrow's new book, *Catch and Kill: Lies, Spies, and a Conspiracy to Protect Predators*, documents his three-year odyssey to take down Weinstein, a serial sexual predator. But Farrow conquers Weinstein with more than 100 pages left to go. He spends the rest of the book exposing the cabal of villains at NBC who, by attempting to thwart Farrow's reporting, made themselves complicit in Weinstein's reign of terror. Farrow notes the bravery and integrity of some NBC employees, including anchor Rachel Maddow and producer Rich McHugh. But his account makes clear that the network's bosses — NBC News Chairman Andy Lack, NBC News President Noah Oppenheim, and MSNBC President Phil Griffin — deserve to be called "enemies of the people."

Farrow began reporting on Weinstein in January 2017. By the next month, he had one of Weinstein's victims, actress Rose McGowan, stating on camera that Weinstein had raped her — an allegation that McGowan corroborated with a legally-binding settlement. Shortly thereafter, Farrow had an audiotape and a corroborating settlement claim from another on-the-record source: the model Ambra Gutierrez, who claimed that Weinstein had forcibly groped her. By summer, Farrow had dozens of sources confirming his story. But NBC shut it all down.

Later, Farrow discovers the real reason for NBC's reticence: Weinstein, who knew of the multiple sexual assault allegations against NBC anchor Matt Lauer, had blackmailed the network into quashing the story. After learning of Farrow's reporting, Weinstein had his friend Dylan Howard, the head of American Media, Inc. (which owns the *National Enquirer* and RadarOnline), pull shelved stories on Lauer for Weinstein to use as leverage over NBC. All the while, he was sending gifts to Oppenheim, such as bottles of Grey Goose, and making livid phone calls to Lack in a desperate bid to kill the story.

In part, Griffin, Lack, and Oppenheim's decision to cover up for Weinstein was motivated by immediate self-interest: None of them wanted to risk losing Lauer, one of the network's stars, or be exposed as having ignored his sexual predation. But they also wanted to maintain their proximity to Weinstein. Farrow notes that Oppenheim, though a successful journalist from the start, had made a foray into screenwriting and evidently craved the cozy relationship with celebrities that his connection with Weinstein brought. Lack likewise "dreamed of Hollywood."

Weinstein, in turn, understood psychology well enough to manipulate those around him. Just as he alternately bullied and flattered his female victims, he played on the vanity of figures like Lack and Oppenheim, praising them and granting them the exclusive Hollywood access they craved. But Farrow had been a household name since his childhood, when his mother accused her then-husband, Woody

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Allen, of abusing Ronan’s sister, Dylan. (Dylan would later repeat this accusation in a 2014 *New York Times* op-ed, which Ronan publicly supported.) He was immune to such overtures.

Not that Weinstein didn’t try. When Farrow finally got Weinstein on the phone to comment on his *New Yorker* story, the movie mogul attempted some pop psychology. “I know what you want,” Weinstein said. “I know you’re scared, and alone, and your bosses abandoned you, and your father — you couldn’t save someone you love, and now you think you can save everyone.” Weinstein wasn’t wrong, but Farrow didn’t care.

Farrow’s narrative features some uniquely cinematic plot twists. In 2016, Weinstein hired Black Cube, a private intelligence company staffed with ex-Mossad agents, to follow Farrow and hack his communications and use undercover operatives to befriend and manipulate McGowan. But for all the high drama of the Weinstein case, Farrow makes clear that the mogul’s crimes — and the conspiracy to hide them — were just the worst of many. Lack and David Corvo, the *Dateline* veteran who took control of the Weinstein story after NBC decided to kill it, delayed publication of a 1999 Juanita Broaddrick interview, in which Broaddrick accused President Bill Clinton of raping her, until after the Senate had voted to acquit Clinton for lying under oath about his affair with Monica Lewinsky. The network also sat on the infamous *Access Hollywood* tape, in which Donald Trump admitted to groping women, until a reporter from the *Washington Post* published the tape and forced its hand.

All the while, NBC was protecting Lauer, not only because he was a star, but also because the network’s top bosses enjoyed treating the office like a frat house. Lack repeatedly initiated affairs with younger female colleagues and then punished them after they split up. Griffin dragged his female producers to strip shows and shared smut around the office. Oppenheim condoned it all. How could anyone expect them to hold Weinstein to account?

But as trite as it may be, the truth won out.

After the *New Yorker* published the Weinstein story, Oppenheim offered Farrow a final defense of his decision to bury it. He explained “there was a *consensus about the organization’s comfort level moving forward.*” But in the end, as Farrow notes, catching a story doesn’t mean it’s killed. Farrow first met McGowan in 2010, while he was working at the State Department. McGowan was visiting the office, and Farrow’s bosses “asked if I’d join them for lunch, like they were looking for a language specialist and figured I spoke fluent actress.” At the lunch, McGowan asked him about his defense of Dylan’s allegations.

“I was asked to say something,” he replied. “That’s the end of it.”

“There’s no end to it,” McGowan said.

Griffin, Lack, and Oppenheim would no doubt disagree. For them, *Catch and Kill* is bound to be the beginning of the end.

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In 'Catch And Kill,' Ronan Farrow overcame spies, intimidation to break some of the biggest stories of the #MeToo era

Author of the article:

[Washington Post](#)



Investigative reporter Ronan Farrow, author "Catch and Kill," earlier this week in New York. His new book delves into the Harvey Weinstein and Matt Lauer cases, among others. The Washington Post by Mary Inhea Kang

Unlike most journalists – most human beings – Ronan Farrow can tell you what it's like to be tailed, surveilled and tracked by people with possibly sinister motives. It is, he attests, kind of stressful.

"I don't want this to sound like woe is me, but I'll be honest," says Farrow. "It's really hard when you're in those moments . . . when you wonder if you're being followed, and it turns out you are, it's frightening."

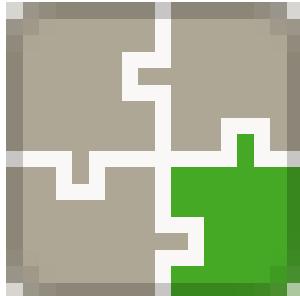
For a few months in 2017, he nervously eyed suspicious-looking vehicles, spent nights in friends' apartments and took evasive maneuvers, like walking against traffic to foil anyone following him in a car.

A friend advised him: Get a gun.

There are a number of these moments threaded through "Catch and Kill: Lies, Spies, and a Conspiracy to Protect Predators," Farrow's chronicle/memoir of his pursuit of allegations of sexual predation against Harvey Weinstein, the Hollywood mogul. As Farrow recounts, Weinstein arrayed not just some big legal guns to thwart him and other reporters, but a host of black-ops characters: former Mossad agents, Ukrainian surveillance pros, European undercover operatives. Their mission was to monitor

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Farrow and other journalists who were closing in on Weinstein. One of Weinstein's subrosa retainers was an Israeli intelligence company called – no joke, Mr. Bond – Black Cube.



Farrow pierced this legal and quasi-espionage veil to land a devastating story about Weinstein, published by the New Yorker exactly two years ago Thursday. The story, which followed by five days a separate series of revelations about Weinstein in the New York Times, earned Farrow and Times reporters Jodi Kantor and Megan Twohey the Pulitzer Prize.

More important, their exposés touched off a cultural avalanche. Within weeks, other powerful men saw their walls of privilege and protection come tumbling down amid the march of the #MeToo movement.

(Weinstein, who eventually was charged with sex-crimes, including rape, faces trial in New York in January. He has pleaded not guilty.)

In the wake of his landmark Weinstein story, Farrow, 31, went on to expose other powerful men and institutions, becoming the go-to journalist of the movement and the moment.

The immediate follow-up to his Weinstein reporting was his disclosure of the “catch and kill” tactics employed by American Media Inc., parent of the National Enquirer, to suppress stories it sometimes later used to blackmail celebrities (the phrase refers to paying sources for exclusive rights to their information and then withholding, or killing, the story). Among the beneficiaries of the tactic: President Donald Trump. Former Playboy model Karen McDougal had told the Enquirer about her alleged affair with Trump, but her story was caught and killed by AMI during the 2016 campaign.

Farrow's subsequent reporting brought down CBS boss Leslie Moonves and New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman (the latter piece co-written with Jane Mayer). Most recently, he revealed that an elite think tank at MIT had a secret funding source: the late billionaire pedophile Jeffrey Epstein. The story prompted the abrupt resignation of its director.

Farrow, of course, is no ordinary reporter. Aside from his background as an intellectual prodigy, his mother is actress Mia Farrow and his father is Woody Allen, although both his parents have suggested at times that his real father is Frank Sinatra (to which Ronan Farrow quips: “We're all possibly Frank Sinatra's son. I'll leave it at that”). His family issues have been tabloid fodder ever since Farrow's sister, Dylan, accused Allen of molesting her when she was 7 in 1992.

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Allen, who has denied the allegation and was never charged with a crime, later married their sister, Soon-Yi Previn, making the director both Ronan's father and his brother-in-law. Allen is long estranged from Mia Farrow and the Farrow siblings.

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Dylan Farrow is both the muse and moral center of “Catch and Kill” as Farrow, then an investigative reporter for NBC News in early 2017, sets about investigating vague allegations against Weinstein. She appears repeatedly throughout his narrative to spur him on as his reporting runs into obstructive forces, including, he writes, his bosses at NBC News. (In his desperation to shake Farrow, Weinstein at one point tried to lean on Woody Allen to persuade Farrow to back off; his representatives later argued that Farrow’s family history was a disqualifying conflict of interest).

Dylan Farrow’s experience, and Allen’s longrunning efforts to suppress and undermine her account, were a kind of foreground story for the book, Farrow says. But he adds, “This isn’t a story in which I’m the hero of her narrative.” Long before the #MeToo era, he confesses, he’d sometimes ask his sister to “shut up” about her accusations.

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“I felt I had to be nakedly honest and vulnerable about that” in writing his account, he says. In tribute to his sister, Farrow included some of her illustrations in the book.

Befitting a Farrow story, “Catch and Kill” is chockablock with scoops and revelations. The most headline grabbing is an allegation by a “Today” show producer, Brooke Nevils, that she was raped by Matt Lauer, the program’s co-host, when they were covering the Winter Olympics in 2014. Lauer – who was fired shortly after Nevils went to NBC’s management in late 2017 – vehemently denied Nevils’ account in a lengthy statement on Wednesday.

Much of Farrow’s book seeks to answer a question that hovered in the background of his celebrated New Yorker article about Weinstein: Why did the story wind up in the New Yorker when Farrow spent months investigating him for NBC News?

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In Farrow’s telling, Lauer is the key to that question. His thesis is that Weinstein pressured NBC News and its executives by using AMI’s accumulated dirt on Lauer to slow down and eventually stop Farrow’s reporting on Weinstein. Farrow writes that NBC covered up multiple allegations against Lauer stretching back years by paying his accusers and ensuring their silence through non-disclosure agreements (NDAs). He also writes about several instances of workplace misconduct by NBC News’ chairman, Andrew Lack, and MSNBC’s president, Phil Griffin, making them vulnerable to exposure by Weinstein. In response, NBC News defended its record of covering harassment stories, citing its coverage of Bill Cosby, Jeffrey Epstein and others.

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It was, Farrow says, “a corporate coverup.”

Farrow writes that NBC even had a corporate euphemism for its settlements – “enhanced severance” – that enabled it to plausibly deny that the payments were hush money.

Needless to say, this has touched off a battle royale with NBC. The network has vigorously disputed Farrow’s premise and his reporting about it. Lack said on Wednesday that NBC was unaware of any issues involving Lauer until Nevils stepped forward, reiterating NBC’s statement on the matter since the story first exploded.

Further, an executive familiar with the network’s legal affairs said in an interview with The Washington Post that Lauer was the subject of four employee complaints – but three of them came in after he was fired following Nevils’ allegations. Contrary to Farrow’s claims, “there is no evidence of a pattern” of earlier claims, said the executive, who spoke with NBC’s approval but would not be identified.

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In the days leading up to the book’s publication next Tuesday, the network has launched a furious public relations counter-attack against Farrow. NBC News president Noah Oppenheim has visited seven news organizations, including The Washington Post, to present an elaborate rebuttal, complete with binders containing timelines, interview transcripts, expense logs and contemporaneous text messages and emails to and from Farrow and his editors documenting his progress on the Weinstein story.

The short version of Oppenheim’s presentation is that Farrow’s reporting wasn’t ready, that he didn’t have any of Weinstein’s accusers on the record at the time he walked away in frustration in August 2017. “There was a wide circle of people (at NBC News), and there was unanimity at the time and there is now, that we made the only decision we could that (Farrow’s reporting) hadn’t met our standards for air,” Oppenheim said.

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But Farrow and his producer at the time, Rich McHugh, say they had several women on the record at the time, and commitments from others to follow suit. They also had a damning audio recording of a police sting in which Weinstein admits to assault.

NBC’s “actions were a massive breach of journalistic integrity,” said McHugh, who left NBC in 2018. “They can do all the verbal gymnastics they want, but at the end of the day, they ordered us to stop reporting.”

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Farrow's editor at the *New Yorker*, David Remnick, also said the reporting was well advanced, though not yet ready for publication, when Farrow initially approached the magazine. It was published within seven weeks.

Interestingly, NBC doesn't dispute one of Farrow's scoops, a minor one but telling nonetheless. In the wake of the Weinstein imbroglio, he writes, the network hired a "Wikipedia whitewasher" to scrub references to the episode from some of its pages, a curious decision for a news organization dedicated to transparency. To this day, there's no reference to the Weinstein affair under Noah Oppenheim's Wikipedia entry, and only a fleeting one in Andy Lack's.

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Whatever the merits of NBC's full-court press against "Catch and Kill," the network's campaign seems more likely to boost the book's sales than to diminish it, and to raise the author's already ascendant – some would say amazing – profile.

The short version of Farrow's prodigious resume:

He started college at the age of 11, and graduated at 15, whereupon he was immediately accepted into Yale Law School. He delayed entry at Yale to work as a speechwriter for Richard Holbrooke, the famed diplomat. He also became a spokesperson for UNICEF in Sudan, Angola and Nigeria.

While still a teenager, he began publishing op-ed columns in the *Wall Street Journal*, *Los Angeles Times* and other newspapers. His commentaries focused on issues involving Africa, such as the wartorn Darfur region of Sudan.

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After finishing Yale Law at 21, he spent two years at the State Department under the Obama administration, running U.S. relations with non-governmental organizations in Pakistan and Afghanistan. He also served as Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's adviser for youth issues.

He then received a Rhodes Scholarship to study abroad at Oxford University.

NBC signed him to a contract at 25, handing him his own daytime MSNBC program, "Ronan Farrow Daily." The show lasted a year before being canceled because of low ratings, but the network kept Farrow on as an investigative correspondent.

Soon enough, in one of the many overlapping elements and crisscrossing personalities that show up in "Catch and Kill," Lauer was introducing Farrow's reports on the "Today" show.

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Along the way, Farrow wrote a best-selling book about the history of American diplomacy, "War on Peace," published last year.

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Earlier this year, he earned a PhD in international relations from Oxford. The subtitle of his 89,000-word thesis: “Political Representation and Strategic Reality in America’s Proxy Wars.” Farrow describes it as an examination of America’s collaborations with foreign militaries and militias.

Aside from Farrow’s formidable intellectual heft, Remnick, the New Yorker’s editor, said he saw something else in the young journalist during his reporting of the Weinstein story: empathy.

“I’ve seen a lot of investigative reporters, but I’ve never seen a situation where so much empathy was required,” Remnick says. “I saw his doggedness and the endless hours he put in, but I also had the opportunity to see him (interact) with the women who were treated so horribly by Weinstein, and it was quite something. There was sincerity. There was patience. It was empathy.”

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Remnick doesn’t know whether Farrow was ever in real danger during this period (“I think the surveillance stuff was mostly designed to intimidate and scare him. I don’t think he was about to get a Luger in the back”), but he also said he never saw Farrow sweat under the pressure. “He was very, very cool,” he said.

While the cinematic elements of “Catch and Kill” make it likely bait for a movie or TV adaptation, Farrow says he hasn’t actively considered offers for the book, though there’s been interest in it since it was first announced last year. (Farrow himself is developing a series of documentaries for HBO about “the abuse of power by individuals and institutions”).

“I wanted to put the book first,” he says, “so I’ve kicked that decision (about selling the rights) down the road.” And then Dr. Farrow gives a gentle laugh, adding: “Not that I’m opposed to it.”

Black Cube (BC Strategy Ltd) is a private corporate intelligence company based in London, Tel Aviv, and Madrid.[\[1\]](#)[\[2\]](#) The company was founded in 2010[\[3\]](#) by former Israeli intelligence officers[\[4\]](#) Dan Zorella (in Hebrew: דן זורלה) and Avi Yanus (in Hebrew: אב' ינוס). Its employees include former members of [Israeli intelligence](#) units.[\[5\]](#)[\[page needed\]](#) Often, it has supported [Israeli Defense Forces \(IDF\)](#) activities.[\[6\]](#)

Black Cube provides intelligence, evidence, and advisory services in multi-jurisdictional legal and [white collar crime](#) cases.[\[2\]](#) Black Cube exposed fraud, bribery, money laundering, corruption and asset dissipation.[\[7\]](#)[\[8\]](#) The company uncovered high-level corruption in [Italy](#), [Panama](#), and [Mexico](#).[\[9\]](#)[\[10\]](#)[\[11\]](#)

Black Cube’s tactics have resulted in a number of international controversies. In Romania, two of its employees were convicted of criminal charges involving harassment and hacking.[\[12\]](#)[\[13\]](#)[\[14\]](#) The firm drew widespread condemnation for its work surveilling and assisting with efforts to slander the reputations of women accusing [Harvey Weinstein](#) of sexual violence and journalists reporting on them.[\[15\]](#)[\[16\]](#)[\[17\]](#)

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Background

BC Strategy Ltd. or Black Cube as it is more commonly known—with offices in Tel Aviv, London, and Paris—was founded in 2010 by Avi Yanus (in Hebrew: אַבִי יָנָס), who was an [Israel Defense Forces](#) (IDF) strategic planning officer, and Dan Zorella (in Hebrew: דָנָן זָרֶלָה), who was in the IDF Military Intelligence.^[18] Yanus and Zorella met at university where they both did graduate studies in economics and Yanus then completed his PhD in organizational behavior.^[18] By 2018, Black Cube had been involved in operations in over sixty countries.^[18]

The company described itself as a "select group of veterans from the Israeli elite intelligence units that specialises in tailored solutions to complex business and litigation challenges."^[1]

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Since 2011, Black Cube has provided clients with evidence to win high-profile cases in a number of countries, including the United Kingdom, Israel, Italy, the United States and Mexico, which have included uncovering corruption cases.

Forbes Israel described highly influential individuals on Black Cube's International Advisory Board, including [Meir Dagan](#), WASs the chief of [Mossad](#)—Israel's national [intelligence agency](#)—from 2002 to 2011, and Black Cube's president.[\[18\]](#) Their IAB includes [Efraim Halevy](#), who WAS head of Mossad for 30 years. Other IAB members include [Yohanan Danino](#), [Giora Eiland](#), [Adrian Leppard](#), [Robert Amaee](#), [Asher Tishler](#), [Paul Reyniers](#), [Golan Malka](#), and [Itiel Maayan](#).[\[1\]](#)

In a court deposition Yanus described the bilateral relationship between the IDF and Black Cube's civilian market, where former Israeli intelligence operators advise Black Rock and provide it with a business network.[\[18\]](#) *Forbes Israel* described how Black Rock is one of many "prominent business intelligence firms" such as GPW, and K2, that are part of a global market that "expanded by 80 billion dollars in 2015 alone"[\[18\]](#) These intelligence firms attract people who previously worked IDF's Military Intelligence. Salaries are high in the business intelligence sector. Dozens of these firms were established as the demand grew. Forbes Israel called this a "new trend in Israeli exports."[\[18\]](#)

Media coverage

In 2014, Israel's *Globes* published a favorable article about Black Cube after they won several high profile cases.[\[2\]](#) In their 2018 article, *Forbes Israel* called Black Cube the "Mossad" of the "business world" in 2018.[\[18\]](#)

Black Cube has been criticized by the international press. In his November 6, 2017 [The New Yorker](#) article, [Ronan Farrow](#) described them as an "army of spies" who attempted to stifle stories about Harvey Weinstein's sexual assaults by seeking to discredit the women Weinstein attacked and the journalists who investigated his crimes.[\[15\]](#) A lengthy June 2021 report in the Canadian newspaper, the *Globe and Mail*—one in a series of articles that were highly critical of its methods—detailed the many ways Black Cube agents worked to fabricate evidence against innocent civilians, including a Canadian judge and journalists.[\[19\]](#) In August 2021, the podcast [Darknet Diaries](#) featured a first-hand account of Black Cube operatives targeting journalists and [Citizen Lab](#) staff member John Scott-Railton.[\[20\]](#) In his 2021 publication, *Spooked: The Trump Dossier, Black Cube, and the Rise of Private Spies*, former investigative reporter with [The New York Times](#), [Barry Meier](#), described the "oversized impact" Black Cube and other private spies in their "murky world"—were "suddenly having on politics, business and our personal lives."[\[5\]](#)[\[page needed\]](#)[\[21\]](#)

Notable investigations and clients

Vincent Tchenguiz (2011-)

The first case that brought Black Cube to the attention of the media, was the legal dispute between [Vincent Tchenguiz](#), a major donor to the [Conservative Party \(UK\)](#) and an investor in the [SCL](#)

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Group^[22] and the UK Serious Fraud Office (SFO).^[2] Tchenguiz first hired Black Cube in 2011, following his arrest on March 10, 2011 as part of the SFO investigation into the collapse of the Icelandic bank Kaupthing.^{[2][23][24]} and continued to use their services on a number of cases.^[2] Black Cube analysed the network of relationships surrounding the collapse of the bank,^[4] and helped build a successful challenge to the SFO arrests and search warrants, causing the judge to declare the SFO's actions unlawful in 2013.^[8] Tchenguiz's lawsuit against Black Cube, alleging fraudulent invoices, was dropped in an undisclosed settlement agreement.^{[25][26]}

Nochi Dankner (2014)

In 2014, Black Cube was hired by Israeli businessman Nochi Dankner, to examine a court decision assigning control of IDB Holding Corp. Ltd. to Motti Ben Moshe.^[2] Black Cube investigated the sources of capital of Ben Moshe, revealing an ongoing investigation by German regulatory authorities into Ben Moshe's company ExtraEnergy,^[27] and locating a witness who held evidence of money laundering and tax evasion by Ben Moshe.^[28]

Nobu Su (2015-)

In 2015, Black Cube assisted Taiwanese businessman Nobu Su, owner of the shipping company TMT, in his efforts to gain permission to appeal a 2014 judgement in favor of Lakatamia Shipping^[29] in which Su was found personally liable for the amount of almost \$47m.^[30] Black Cube delivered intelligence to Su's legal team showing that 20% of the judgement amount was due to a company called Slagen Shipping, which had ceased operations at the time of the establishment of the claim, thereby rendering it unable to act as a claimant, both reducing the quantum of the judgement significantly, and causing the appeal to be granted.^[31]

Kfar Giladi Quarries (2016-)

Black Cube was hired to assist Kfar Giladi Quarries in their highly publicized dispute with Caeserstone in Israel. Black Cube engaged a Caesarstone engineer in conversation during a group bicycle trip in Kfar Giladi.^[8] In the recording, the engineer contradicted the allegations that were made by Ceaserstone in the arbitration proceeding with Kfar Giladi. After six years of deliberations, Judge Boaz Okun ordered Caeserstone to pay more than \$14m as compensation to Kfar Giladi.^[32]

AmTrust Financial Services and Antonio Somma (2016-)

In 2016, Black Cube was involved in exposing bribery and corruption in a set of Italian arbitrations between AmTrust and an Italian named Antonio Somma totaling €2bn.^[7] Somma admitted to the company's undercover agents that he could control the arbitration panels,^[33] and that he had an agreement to pay the chair of the arbitration panel 10% of any money they awarded him.^[34] Following Black Cube's findings, the arbitrator was dismissed and in July 2016, the two sides reached a settlement on the total of 60 million euros instead of the initial 2 billion euro claim.^[35]

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Rami Levy Hashikma Marketing (2016-)

In 2016, Black Cube was hired by [Rami Levy](#), the owner of Rami Levy Chain Stores Hashikma Marketing who is considered a champion of low prices in Israel,[36] to verify his suspicions that he was being targeted by a rival chain in a negative media campaign. Black Cube provided Levy with evidence that the PR agent who worked for Levy's competitor, Victory supermarket chain, exposed the negative campaign that they carried out aimed at damaging Levy's public reputation. Levy later used those materials in a lawsuit against his competitor.[37]

Alstom and Afcon (2016-)

In 2016, France's [Alstom](#) and its Israeli partner Afcon hired Black Cube to assist them with their dispute against the Israel Railways' electrification bid, which the Spanish company SEMI won. Black Cube presented recordings of officials from the Israel Railway discussing malfunctions that occurred in the bid. Based on these findings, in January 2018, the Superior Court in Israel issued an agreement of compromise according to which the work on the railway will be divided between all three of the companies and that Black Cube's clients' work will be priced at 580 million NIS, after they originally lost the bid.[38][18]

Harvey Weinstein (2016-)

In 2017, Black Cube made headlines after it was revealed that in 2016 the film executive [Harvey Weinstein](#) had hired private investigators—including Kroll and Black Cube—with its highly-trained "ex-Mossad agents"—in his efforts to suppress allegations by numerous women that he had sexually harassed or assaulted them.[17][39] In his July 2016 contract with Black Cube, Weinstein clarified that the explicit goal of the investigation was to stop the abuse allegations from surfacing. In his November 6, 2017 [The New Yorker](#) article, entitled "Harvey Weinstein's Army of Spies", [Ronan Farrow](#) described in detail how Black Cube agents tracked and met journalists and actresses. They focused in particular on [Rose McGowan](#), who later publicly accused Weinstein of rape. Over the course of a year, Black Cube and other agencies, "target, or collect information on, dozens of individuals, and compile psychological profiles that sometimes focused on their personal or sexual histories." [15][16][17] One agent, Stella Penn Pechanac, used an alias to pose as a [women's rights](#) supporter interested in hiring McGowan for a [formal dinner speech](#), enabling her to secretly record conversations with the actress. [40][41][42][43] Black Cube apologized for taking the case in November 2017.[44] As of 2019, [Manhattan federal prosecutors](#) investigating Weinstein were probing into the firm's activities on his behalf;[45] and McGowan's separate [racketeering](#) suit against it remained active.[46] During Weinstein's 2020 trial for assault in Manhattan, Black Cube's spying on behalf of Weinstein was entered into evidence in January.[47] In November 2017, Black Cube set up a fake recruitment firm, and flew an employee and a former employee of a hedge fund company to London for fake job interviews, in order to gain proprietary information about the hedge fund, according to [The New York Times](#). Black Cube refused to comment. In New York State, private investigators are required to be licensed, but the Times couldn't find a record of a license for Black Cube or B.C. Strategy.[48]

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Gefen Biomed (2017-)

In 2017, Gefen Biomed filed a NIS 60 million lawsuit which claims that entrepreneurs Moshe (Mori) Arkin and others deliberately misled or deceived minority shareholders in biomed company cCam Biotherapeutics. The lawsuit is based on evidence collected by Black Cube, which conducted recorded interviews with key figures in cCam that prove a deliberate and systematic attempt to conceal exit talks with [Merck](#) for up to \$625 million.[\[49\]](#)

Iran Nuclear Deal and President Donald Trump (2017-)

In 2017 aides to U.S. President [Donald Trump](#) had contracted with Black Cube in order to undermine the Iran Nuclear Deal by discrediting two of former Obama administration officials such as Colin Kahl and Ben Rhodes. They looked for evidence of unsubstantiated and false claims that Kahl and Rhodes were being enriched by Iran lobbyists and that they were cheating on their spouses.[\[50\]](#)[\[51\]](#)[\[52\]](#)[\[53\]](#) [\[54\]](#) The goal was to seek damaging information about former Obama administration officials and help the Trump administration undermine the [Iran nuclear deal](#).[\[55\]](#) Black Cube claimed in response that it had no relation to the Trump administration, to Trump aides, or to the Iran nuclear deal.[\[56\]](#) In August 2018, [The New Yorker](#) connected Black Cube's research to a memo circulated in the Trump White House in early 2017 alleging former Obama officials 'conspired with reporters' "to undermine President Trump's foreign policy" in hopes of saving [Obamacare](#) and the Iran nuclear deal.[\[57\]](#) In October 2018, [Haaretz](#) newspaper revealed[\[58\]](#) that Black Cube's activities were aimed at tracking transfers of Iranian funds and assets in order to forfeit them, following US court rulings against Iran in favor of victims of terror attacks. Furthermore, it was published that the goal of the intelligence gathering was tracing unknown Iranian assets and revealing Obama's administration collaboration with Iran, in violation of US or international law, in order to find other possible parties to sue such as banks.

Project Maple Tree - Project Camouflage (2017)

A detailed June 12, 2021 report in Toronto, Canada's *Globe and Mail* described Black Cube's "Bay Street sting that went bust" as "Project Camouflage".[\[19\]](#) It was revealed in Ontario provincial court documents that Black Cube's client Toronto-based private-equity firm Catalyst owned by [Newton Glassman](#) had paid about \$CDN 11 million to Black Cube for an effort code-named 'Project Maple Tree' to "embarrass" and improperly discredit Ontario Justice Frank Newbould.[\[59\]](#) Catalyst Capital Group and West Face Capital had been involved in a lengthy and multi-pronged legal battle after West Face acquired [WIND Mobile](#), a Canadian wireless provider in 2014.[\[19\]](#)[\[60\]](#) In his August 18, 2016 [Ontario Superior Court of Justice](#) decision, Justice Newbould ruled against Catalyst in favor of West Face,[\[61\]](#)[\[62\]](#) and said that Catalyst's owner, [Newton Glassman](#) was "aggressive," "argumentative" and "considerably difficult."[\[63\]](#) Justice Newbould awarded West Face \$1,239,965, saying that Glassman was "certainly playing hardball attacking the reputation and honesty of West Face" because he had lost the opportunity to acquire Wind.[\[61\]](#) In retaliation, Glassman hired Black Cube, to dispatch agents to discredit Newbould and West Face, according to a March 31, 2021 *Wall Street Journal* article.[\[59\]](#) Through this story, Black Rock received coverage in Canadian media.[\[60\]](#)[\[61\]](#)[\[63\]](#)

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Bank Hapoalim (2018-)

In 2018, Black Cube was hired by [Bank Hapoalim](#)^[64] to trace the assets of Motti Zisser, who left behind a high debt to the bank. Black Cube provided intelligence of Zisser having a number of assets in Europe which were transferred from him to his son David through a sophisticated network of shell companies. As a result of the intelligence gathered by Black Cube, Bank Hapoalim was granted an injunction that applied an effective freeze on all the companies of the Zisser Family, which resulted in a settlement of the Zisser family returning 95 million NIS to the bank.^[65]

Viktor Orban's re-election (2018-)

In 2018, Black Cube supported [Viktor Orban](#)'s re-election campaign gaining taped telephone conversations of individuals associated with [George Soros](#) who was actively opposing Orban's re-election.^{[66][67][68][69]} According to [Tamar Zandberg](#), Hungary was "carrying out an anti-Semitic campaign against Soros" and that [Benjamin Netanyahu](#), which she stated that his [Likud](#) has dangerous ties to "extreme right-wing parties in Europe", openly supported Orban's anti-Semitic re-election campaign.^[70] She stated that Black Cube's support for Orban is an "Israeli embarrassment."^[70]

Janio Lescure and Judge Oydén Ortega (2019-)

In 2019, Black Cube uncovered proof of bribery and corruption between lawyer Janio Lescure of Panama and various judges and magistrates in the country, including Judge Oydén Ortega of the Supreme Court.^{[71][10][72]} Black Cube was able to procure audios of Lescure admitting his close relationships with judges, state officials, and mafiosos as well as his ability to control court verdicts, bypass inspections of illegal activities, and avoiding paying taxes.^{[9][73]}

NSO Group (2018-19)

In October 2018, [Associated Press](#) reported that two University of Toronto cybersecurity researchers were being pursued by undercover operatives with false identities who were inquiring about the researchers' work concerning the Israeli spyware company NSO Group. The operatives also appeared to be trying to goad the researchers into making anti-Semitic or otherwise damaging remarks. After a sting operation organised by one of the researchers and the AP, one operative was photographed and later identified as a former Israeli security official who had previously worked on a case linked to Black Cube. Responding to the revelation, NSO Group denied contracting Black Cube, and Black Cube likewise denied involvement.^[74]

In February 2019, Associated Press reported that at least four more individuals - three lawyers, and one journalist - were pursued by undercover operatives for their work on NSO. Undercover agents again tried to goad the individuals into making racist or anti-Israel remarks. Channel 12, an Israeli television channel, obtained and aired the secret recordings made by the undercover operatives shortly before the AP published the revelations.^[75] Channel 12 confirmed that Black Cube undercover investigators were involved,^{[76][75]} and claimed the individuals being investigated by Black Cube were attempting to smear NSO Group on behalf of Qatar.^[76]

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Eliezer Fishman (2019-)

In 2019, Black Cube exposed Eliezer Fishman's hidden assets valued at around €100 million. Fishman, once considered one of Israel's wealthiest businessmen, was declared bankrupt in 2016. Black Cube discovered that Fishman had hidden assets and properties across Europe, mainly Germany, through legal entities, trustees, and representatives.[\[77\]](#)

Beny Steinmetz

In May 2020, Black Cube submitted on behalf of Beny Steinmetz evidence to a New York court that the Brazilian company Vale SA withheld critical information concerning a mining license in Guinea obtained by Steinmetz.[\[78\]](#)[\[79\]](#) During a four-month operation, Black Cube gathered recordings with Vale senior executives, who admitted that Vale assumed the mining license was obtained illegally when they entered into the contract, contradicting an arbitration award of \$1.8 billion in favor of Vale.[\[80\]](#)

Petróleos Mexicanos (2019-)

In October 2019, it was revealed that Black Cube recorded evidence of bribery and corruption of senior officials at Mexico's Petróleos Mexicanos, known as Pemex.[\[11\]](#) The recordings were submitted as part of a lawsuit filed in 2018 by Oro Negro, a Mexican oil-field drilling company, claiming that Pemex drove Oro Negro into bankruptcy when the company refused to pay bribes. Black Cube recordings offer evidence of long-standing corruption in Mexico's largest state enterprise, in all levels of Pemex management up to the CEO and board.[\[81\]](#) This evidence was additionally presented to the DOJ in their investigation into Pemex.[\[11\]](#)

Controversies

Convicted of spying on Laura Codruța Kövesi (2016-)

In April 2016, two of the company employees were arrested, and later convicted, in Bucharest on suspicions of spying, phishing, and cyberharassing the chief prosecutor of the Romanian National Anticorruption Directorate, Laura Codruța Kövesi, and people close to her.[\[82\]](#)[\[13\]](#) After sentencing, the company reached an understanding with the Romanian authorities and the two employees were released and returned to Israel after a few months.[\[83\]](#) At the time of the arrest, Black Cube denied any wrongdoing, saying that they were working under contract from the highest political powers in Bucharest and that "all of Black Cube's employees follow local law to the letter, and the allegations against them are unfounded and untrue".[\[84\]](#)[\[85\]](#)

Black Cube spied on civilians during Hungarian election campaign

Between December 2017 and February 2018 Black Cube set up a cover company called Smart Innotech, seated in London, UK, and contacted Hungarian Migration Aid Hungary by email, urging them to have a meeting in Vienna, Austria. Migration Aid contacted the Hungarian foreign intelligence (Alkotmányvédelmi Hivatal) and recorded and tightly controlled the meetings. Black Cube attempted to

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collect data on migrants, and on Hungarian opposition party members, to uncover alleged ties with George Soros; which were proven to be false.[\[86\]](#) Black Cube failed to gather any information; the company—which was never registered—disappeared after February.[\[87\]](#)[\[88\]](#)[\[89\]](#)[\[90\]](#)[\[91\]](#) Black Cube used the same methods with multiple NGOs, like [Open Society Foundations](#) Hungary and the [Hungarian Helsinki Committee](#).[\[89\]](#)

Russia probe

On 5 April 2019 the [Senate Intelligence Committee](#) sent a letter to [Walter Soriano](#), the owner of USG Security Limited based in Britain and Israel, for his communication with [Paul Manafort](#), [Michael Flynn](#), [Psy-Group](#), [Wikistrat](#), [Orbis Business Intelligence](#) (a firm co-founded by [Christopher Steele](#)), and Black Cube.[\[92\]](#)[\[93\]](#) In response, the company denied any connection and stated that “neither they nor anyone acting on their behalf has ever had any communication or collaboration with Walter Soriano or anyone on his behalf.”[\[94\]](#)

International Advisory Board

- [Meir Dagan](#) (Deceased) – Former head of [Mossad](#), Honorary President of the Board.[\[95\]](#)
- [Efraim Halevy](#) – Former head of [Mossad](#), headed the National Security Council and the Hebrew University Center for Strategic Studies.[\[95\]](#)[\[96\]](#)
- [Yohanan Danino](#) – Former [Israeli Police](#) Commissioner, served as Chairman of Migdal Insurance Group.[\[97\]](#)[\[98\]](#)
- Major General [Giora Eiland](#)[\[99\]](#) – Former head of the Israeli [National Security Council](#), headed the [IDF's Operation Branch](#) and [IDF's Planning Branch](#).
- Robert Amaee – Former Head of Anti-Corruption, Proceeds of Crime and International Assistance at the [Serious Fraud Office](#) (SFO).[\[95\]](#)
- Professor [Asher Tishler](#) – President of the College of Management Academic Studies[\[4\]](#)
- Brigadier General Mati Leshem[\[100\]](#) – Recipient of the 1997 Israel Defense Prize[\[101\]](#)
- Paul Reyniers[\[102\]](#) – Former partner at [Price Waterhouse](#) and author of GARP (Generally Accepted Risk Principles)[\[103\]](#)
- Itiel Maayan – Member of [Microsoft](#)'s Customer Advisory Board[\[102\]](#)
- Lieutenant Colonel Golan Malka[\[102\]](#) – Former Vice President Marketing and Business Development of [NICE Systems](#)*[citation needed]*

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